
Book Reviews

Reviewed by Luc Hens

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- 1 Design for Sustainability. A Practical Approach**
by: Tracy Bhamra and Vicky Lofthouse
Published 2013
by Ashgate Publishing Ltd.
Wey Court East, Union Road, Farnham,
Surrey, GU9 7PT, England, UK, 9 chapters, 184pp
ISBN-13: 9780566087042

Some 82,000 chemicals are registered for commercial use in the USA alone; in Europe, roughly 150,000 chemicals were preregistered for a later full registration within the REACH Directive, and lawn care products. An estimated 2,000 new chemicals are introduced annually for application in everyday items such as food, personal care products, prescription drugs, household cleaners. In total, more than 100,000 chemicals are in the market and in addition many thousands of other chemicals are present as pollutants in complex mixtures.

To reduce these most significant numbers of chemicals in the environment and their associated ecological and health risks, an effective product policy is one of the main instruments. Part of this policy is designing products containing fewer and fewer impacting chemicals. However, designing for sustainability faces a wider challenge. The approach offers, definitely for designers, a newer context including responsibility on social and eco-equity, creating synergies between design and changing social needs, holistic in the parameters involved (environmental, social, economic, ethical, and multi-functional), restorative in integrating environmental quality and social aspects, eco-efficient in particular on pressing issues such as energy and materials use, creative in transcending traditional boundaries, and driven by a visionary mission on outcomes and methods. Design for sustainability is increasingly necessary and applied in an increasing number of sectors ranging from automobiles, over daily used kitchen products, to bio-ethical fair foods. Design for sustainability is increasingly used by banks and insurance companies assessing the 'corporate social responsibility' character of a company, and consequently their lending and investment policies.

This book analyses, details and reflects on this wider context of design for sustainability. It investigates how design can contribute to alleviating global environmental and social problems. The book is structured in nine chapters, which cover three groups. The first group contains chapters providing the context of design for sustainability. The introduction chapter focuses on definitions, and chapter 2 offers a bird perspective overview on sustainable development. The chapter concludes with the call of governments moving in a more significant way as compared to the past forwards towards sustainable development. Chapter 3 analyses both demand from and response to business

on sustainable development. It puts emphasis on the proactive and positive view of the general business community on sustainability.

The next two chapters address the core of the issue. They deal respectively with the technical and the managerial (product life cycle, and materials selection) context and the 'materials and methods' (environmental impact assessment, strategic assessment, and information).

The third group of chapters is about the practice of design for sustainability. Two chapters present case studies. Chapter 6 offers ten cases dealing with product improvement and redesign. Environmentally sound designs of washing machines, eco-bottles and mobile phones are discussed. Sensitive cases as single use photo cameras are included. All together these cases demonstrate the progress on sustainability design during the past years. The chapter equally shows how a life cycle approach results in effective environmental improvements on energy consumption, materials use, and waste, among others. Chapter 8 focuses on case studies of systems and services, including eco-kitchens, car clubs, and functional sales. It identifies opportunities for consumer loyalty, innovation, value retention in a product, and positive profiling as pertinent benefits of sustainability design. The two case studies chapters are separated by a discussion on concepts in sustainable design. Chapter 7 shows this is not only a matter of less environmentally impacting products, but definitely – and maybe even more – of rethinking systems and services which are expected to become more prolific during the years to come.

The last chapter is about 'doing a sustainable industrial design project'. The phases of design projects (concept, idea development, and details of the design) are discussed up to the question of how to generate a student project. Surprisingly for a chapter on practical aspects, it points to education and information as key factors.

This book discusses (part of) the history, core concepts, tools, implementation, strong examples, ethics and human rights related to design for sustainability. This wide, interdisciplinary approach is a strength and provides the non-technically skilled reader with a broad both general and in depth insight in the field. Reading this book raises sensitivity and awareness on contemporary issues of product development. It defines the challenges in a clear and sharp way. It shows the way to designers who are prepared to take responsibility replying to the new, green demands of society. It does so going beyond the classical examples of the Body Shop or the Starbucks products. A weaker point is the lack of a concluding chapter.

The book is written in a most accessible language. The didactical approach makes the reader feel that teachers, trainers and consultants hold the pen. The book is functionally illustrated with photographs and drawings. Each chapter provides a conclusion and a reference list, mainly covering the period of the late 1990s until the first decade of the new millennium. This is one of the signs showing this book is a revised edition of the 2007 publication on the same subject.

The authors, Bhamra and Lofthouse, researched and taught environmental design for 15 years at Loughborough University (UK). This book is a culmination of their knowledge and know-how. It is an excellent product for practitioners and trainers.

In summary, this book is an essential reference for designers, in particular those aiming at contributing to a more sustainable world. At the same time, it offers most inspiring reading for decision makers and consultants of government and business in the

sector. It is most useful for students of (management of) design, product development, and marketing.

The book is not a 'stand alone event'. It is part of the outstanding Glover series on 'Design for social responsibility'. This series published volumes for all those interested in design issues going beyond 'profit' and including, among others, green consumption and ethics. The series, which includes design publications on health care and project management, is also excellent from a concept and format point of view.

2 Entrepreneurship and Sustainability. Business Solutions for Poverty Alleviation from around the World

by: Daphne Halkias and Paul W. Thurman

Published 2012

by Gower Publishing Ltd.

Wey Court East, Union Road, Farham,

Surrey, GU9 7PT, England, UK, 23 chapters, 243pp

ISBN: 978-1-4094-2873-2 (hbk)

ISBN: 978-1-4094-2874-9 (ebk-FDF)

ISBN: 978-1-4094-6048-0 (ebk-ePUB)

'The Future We Want', the main document summarising the action areas advocated by the Rio+20 Conference (Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, June 20–22nd, 2012) advocates green economy as a main instrument to eradicate poverty, while maintaining the healthy functioning of the environment. Part of green economy is economic stewardship. Companies not only have an economic (profit) and social (employment, product quality) responsibility, but should also deal with their impact on the environment. Entrepreneurs have a core role in the transition to carbon free/poor energies and in the repositioning of their enterprises to the evolving needs of society. Sustainability driven entrepreneurs design ventures with the primary intention of contributing to economic profit on par with improved environmental quality and social well-being in ways that are mutually supportive. In other words, managers should act as the instigators of a social change towards sustainable development.

While in the original Brundtland report (WCED, 1987) and in the follow-up UNCED Conference (UN, 1992) an important accent was on environmental sustainability, since the Millennium Declaration (UN, 2000) and the WSSD in Johannesburg (UN, 2002) the focus moved to sustainable development as a way of alleviating poverty. Around the world 1.4 billion people live in extreme poverty. Sustainable companies, driven by the concept of corporate social responsibility (CSR), should contribute to alleviating poverty. In the context of this book, this life-changing moment for millions should emerge from the combination of three forces of change: enterprise, technology and people.

The book is a collection of worldwide selected cases on this rather recent sub-field of international development that aims to fight poverty through local business. Apart from a prologue, the book covers case studies from four continents. The section on Asia (including Australia) is represented by six case studies on entrepreneurship and poverty including examples from China, over Lebanon to New Zealand. Of interest is the chapter

on 'Bilanot Fiesta Foods' in the Philippines. This small scale project combines Filipino values, local cuisine and environmental protection. Poor people use banana leaves as a resource for compost, while the bananas are used for producing snack foods. Although the programme helped to transform the life of only 50 families it shows that CSR initiatives need to be an integral part of a company's strategy being sustainable.

Part III entails five cases from (West, Central and Southern) Africa. Issues on empowering women, training and luxury cloths are discussed. The section on Europe entails seven case studies including examples from the UK, over the Czech Republic, to Russia. Noticeable is the report of the 'Women's Cooperative Bank' in Cyprus. This is an NGO supporting female entrepreneurship through easier access to finance. A systematic, practical and sound approach allowing to establish a successful, sustainable organisation empowering women with support and respect of the local and international community.

The last part of the book contains three chapters with cases from 'The Americas'. The Columbia chapter is about an entrepreneurial initiative for African women displaced by violence. The book concludes with a chapter on a 'Family Sandwich Shop' in South Carolina (USA).

The book collects success cases on sustainable, merely small scale entrepreneurship. It is impressive in covering a wide, almost worldwide, geographic area. It is impressive by the wide array of subjects – from education and training, over multi stakeholder approaches, to knowledge-intensive economies – which are covered. It is impressive by the 42 authors contributing to this project. The editors – both academic experts in social sciences – did an excellent job in aligning the content and the format of the 21 chapters. The totality of the book is driven by the question: 'how can a (small scale) CSR motivated entrepreneur contribute to sustainable development and poverty alleviation?'. The case studies provide partial answers to this question:

- Vision, strategy and competence.
- Fairness, reasonableness, openness and transparency of the projects, with respect for minorities and human rights.
- Meeting a combination of environmental, social, economic, ethical, and local needs, while avoiding negative (criminal, and socially non-acceptable) impacts.
- Based on realistic criteria (as e.g., projected payback capacity for loans).

It is regrettable that a concluding chapter summarising these lessons learned, lacks.

The cases analysed in this book are, no doubt, inspiring for researchers, theoreticians and practitioners in CSR, green economy and sustainable development. They offer excellent basic material for in-depth discussions in classes of both new generations of sociologists (and economists in particular) and students in interdisciplinary environmental sciences and human ecology.

Overall, this book is a most valuable academic contribution in the new and rapidly rising field of social entrepreneurship that is currently under-researched.

3 Chasing Water. A Guide for Moving from Scarcity to Sustainability**by: Brian Richter****Published 2014****by Island Press****200 M Street, Suite 650, 20036,****Washington DC, USA, 8 chapters, 171pp****ISBN-13:978-1-61091-536-6 (hardback)****ISBN-10: 1-61091-536-4 (cloth)****ISBN-13: 978-1-61091-538-0 (paper)**

An often returning question of my students is ‘How many people can the earth ecosystem sustain?’. I have no simple numerical answer to this question, but I hope to help them by referring to the limits of our environmental assets. Among them, water (and not food, energy, or air) is the most constraining. The issue of sufficient amounts of drinking water in a wide variety of places worldwide ranked already high on the agenda of the World Summit for Sustainable Development (Johannesburg, South Africa) in 2002 and has remained on the international environmental major concerns list since then. The issue settled in the perception of people as the ‘water crisis’, which was illustrated by an increasing number of sometimes disastrous examples of water mismanagement and shortage. Long-term solutions to the problem are more rarely described. This book is exactly on these aspects: what do we learn from experiences in the past to move towards more sustainability in water scarcity management?

The first chapter formulates the problem. Starting from examples of the Colorado River, the Tigris-Euphrates basin (Middle East), and elsewhere on the planet, water scarcity in the world is described. The chapter echoes a conclusion of the global water scarcity assessment of the World Economic Forum: ‘We are now on the verge of water bankruptcy in many places with no way of paying the debt back’.

Illustrative examples in chapter 2 make fundamental concepts and mechanisms of water ecology easily accessible: the water account, the water budget, and planning for a sustainable future.

Chapter 3 discusses options for resolving water bankruptcy. Its core is six ways for balancing a community’s water budget: desalinisation, reuse, importation, storage, management, and conservation. It concludes that investing in agricultural water conservation is usually the least expensive and most environmentally friendly way out of water scarcity.

Chapter 4 deals with water as a ‘commons’ asset. The role of governments in allocating water costs is addressed. The chapter analyses the reasons why regulations were not able preventing the depletion of water resources in many places worldwide. A reasonable way out of the problem is sustainable management of water resources.

Chapter 5 offers seven sustainability principles that underlie success in a variety of places: a shared vision, limits on consumption, allocation and monitoring, conservation, trade, subsidies, and adjusted management. The chapter is a wake-up call to apply these principles in water management.

Chapter 6 is on stakeholders in the water management debate. Involving people in efforts resolving their water problems and looking in this issue as a process, is just wise.

The theory of chapters 5 and 6 is applied to the Australian Murray-Darling Basin. This case study shows how a government mediated process of involving stakeholders helps in establishing a shared vision on water management.

The concluding chapter is about 'chasing hope'. Hope emerges from water professionals, scientists, and local community leaders worldwide proposing practical water solutions and galvanising support for their implementation.

The book offers a clear, information rich, pragmatic and motivating vision on water scarcity. The author uses an inductive methodology. Starting from specific cases – the Colorado River crosses as a red ribbon through different chapters of this book – he shows how citizens-empowered sustainable water management offers opportunities addressing water scarcity and its deleterious effects on the environment of which humans are part. The global outlook of the book is illustrated with a map of 65 places worldwide of which cases, examples and illustrations are provided.

The author provides an optimistic view on the problem of water scarcity. He lists, discusses and comments on policy and managerial ways of alleviating this increasingly pressing and important environmental issue. This provides the book with a quite unique scope in a bulk of literature which is dominated by negative reports on water quality and availability and the technical approaches addressing the problems. The aspects related to water management are discussed in a way which is most accessible also for non-experts. Although this is not a scientific textbook – the manuscript is mainly driven by personal experiences, a wide knowledge of the area, and the practice of the author in The Nature Conservancy organisation – it will be of significant value in motivating students, trainers, consultants, policy makers and their advisors, and a wide range of people from different backgrounds interested in establishing a more secure and sustainable water future.

A great book. We should have more publications of this stimulating type.

4 Political Ecology. A Critical Introduction. 2nd ed.

by: Paul Robbins

Published 2012

by John Wiley & Sons Ltd.

**The Atrium, Southern Gate, Chichester,
West Sussex, PO19 8SQ, UK, 13 chapters**

ISBN: 978-0-470-65732-4

Changing environmental situations, whether on spreading waste, the effects of climate changes, or the fate of wild animals, are closely related to action and to politics. The environmental movement understood this already in its early days. Research on the subject and academic reflection followed later.

This book overviews the academic aspects of environmental politics. It is organised in four parts. Part one introduces the field. It entails chapters on the definition of the term ('Political ecology aims at unravelling political forces at work in environmental access, management and transformation'; it is about what people do on common environmental questions), on its roots 'arguing that political ecologists are around since a very long time'), on its history (starting from the pioneering work of Alexander von Humboldt), and on the characteristics of texts on political ecology (a debate with winners and losers, narrated with dialectics, full of contradictions, and based on reports as state of the environment studies which are politicised in nature).

Part two is about the problem formulation of and the challenges to political ecology: environmental change, degradation and destruction, research challenges, and (fast increasing) land use changes. Conforming to the subtitle of the book, these challenges are presented as critical lessons for political ecology, while at the same time they continue reflecting and reinforcing problems the area has to address.

Part three examines five central themes of political ecological research. The five chapters are about degradation and marginalisation, conservation and control, environmental conflict and exclusion, environmental subjects and identity, and political objects and actors.

Part four offers a conclusion to the book. It is about lessons learned and about how political ecology can expand and improve in the future. Understanding international ecological politics is one of the central concerns.

Like politics itself, this book covers very wide areas of the scientific and societal environmental discussion. Even when most building blocks are derived from American experience, the outlook and the cases are most international. The subjects under discussion can be characterised by a wide variety of keywords ranging from land use changes and urban ecology, over environmental justice, cultural ecology and feminist studies, to critical science and history, and power-knowledge relationships. As such it provides an introduction and a companion to the academic discourse and research on ecological politics. At the same time, the text offers a critical review of the work going on in this field. The manuscript is annotated with a multitude of personal notes by the author. It provides grounded arguments on what makes research in this area urgent. It points to useful lessons from past experience. These are no doubt significant for formulating projects in the future. The book goes beyond policy and offers a well-documented and advocated step up to politics.

The text is classically structured. It takes off from definitions (part I), turns into challenges (part II), and concludes on central theses for theory formulation (part III). The author uses a wealth of (traditional and new) cases, often dovetailing in his own experience. This case study driven approach places the theory in context, which contributes to the accessibility of the book. Other elements the reader will appreciate include excellent summary tables and figures, topical illustrations, and informative box texts.

Almost inevitably a book on such a wide field is incomplete. Environmental politics covers too many topics, is interconnected with too many research areas, and shows such a wide international diversity that even striving towards completeness would be irrational. No surprise the subject witnesses a fast increasing number of publications.

This book appeals to a wide academic audience: master and PhD students in environmental sciences and human ecology, researchers in ecological politics and related fields as environmental law and sociology. Both the subject and the accessible character of the book make it most useful for a wide group of non-expert professionals operating in environmental consultancy and expertise. It is a book for all of us interested in the need for better environmental politics, explanation, and ethics.

In its second edition, this book is offered as an e-book (in three formats). For the novice user of this type of 'publications for the future', the experience is likely to be mixed. The many useful aids, e.g., highlighting parts of the text or allowing personal comments, are a bonus in particular for students and researchers. On the other hand, when it comes to over-viewing the text or to tactility, readers might continue preferring a hard copy.

Book Review

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Environmental Engineering: Principles and Practice

by: **Richard O. Mines, Jr. (Editor)**

Published 2014

by **Wiley-Blackwell John Wiley and Sons Ltd.**

The Atrium, Southern Gate, Chichester,

West Sussex, PO19 8SQ, UK, 12 chapters, 637pp

ISBN: 978-1-118-80145-1

Environmental engineering is the integration of science and engineering principles to improve the natural environment, to provide healthy water, air, and land for human habitation and for other organisms, and to clean up pollution sites. This definition, coined in Wikipedia, perfectly summarises the contents of book.

This title *Environmental Engineering: Principles and Practice* suggests that the book is mainly meant for practitioners, desiring to refresh or enlarge their theoretical basis and to find important information as well as handy hints, for further use in daily practice. Practising engineers may find this book a valuable resource for self-study, yet would regret that the contents of this manual remain forcibly basic and are not comprehensive or dealing with actual practice. Indeed, the book is specially written as a textbook for advanced US undergraduate and first-semester graduate courses on the title subject.

The book is composed of twelve chapters devoted to the following topics (number of pages, % of the total of 637 active pages):

- 1 Introduction to environmental engineering and problem solving (42pp or 7%).
- 2 Essential chemistry concepts (60pp or 9%).
- 3 Water and wastewater characteristics (36pp or 6%).
- 4 Essential biology concepts (56pp or 9%).
- 5 Environmental systems: modelling and reactor design (44pp or 7%).
- 6 Design of water treatment systems (92pp or 14%).
- 7 Design of wastewater treatment systems (118pp or 19%).

- 8 Municipal solid waste management (30pp or 5%).
- 9 Air pollution (40pp or 6%).
- 10 Environmental sustainability (36pp or 6%).
- 11 Environmental public health (40pp or 6%).
- 12 Hazardous waste management (19pp or 3%).
- 13 Table of Mendeleev and index (21pp or 3%).

There is also a dedicated website with illustrations, problems and solutions. Richard O. Mines, Jr. signed the chapters 2 to 7. Other authors include A.J. Butler (Chapter 1), Dr. P.T. McCreanor (Chapter 8), A.B. Nunn (Chapter 9), Dr. J.C. Little and Dr. Zhe Liu (Chapter 10), Dr. P. Vikesland (Chapter 11), and Dr. J.T. and P.J. Novak (Chapter 12). Most authors belong either to Mercer University, Macon, GA, or Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA, USA.

Each chapter starts with synthetic *learning objectives* that the reader is to be faced with. Then, some theoretical principles are introduced and soon supported by numerous examples illustrating either the theory or a design approach through problems and examples selected carefully to facilitate understanding. Each chapter is also followed by a summary, keywords, references, and problems to try and solve. Those reading the book for purposes of self-study will be comforted to find the model solutions on a companion website, which also supplies all figures and tables provided in the textbook. This underlines once more the emphasis on the supporting function for teachers in environmental technology.

It is difficult to judge the respective contents selected for presentation in this textbook. Obviously, it is impossible to present all aspects of physics, chemistry, mathematics and problem solving comprehensively in a single volume of this size. Still, some qualities and parts are highly appreciated, such as the clear and concise presentation of facts, formulas, and definitions. Quite useful is the discussion on data collection, analysis, interpretation and communication, which tells the reader what environmental data is about and how to use tables, figures, regression, ANOVA, etc. in less than half of Chapter 1. Other parts are more likely to be too brief, or not to the point, should the reader be a non-American teacher: the environment is still a legislation-driven business and the legal scope, content and context distinct, depending whether you live in the USA, the EU, Japan or elsewhere. This reservation particularly applies to the parts on (hazardous) waste management. The basic concern and leading theme in the book is, in fact, water treatment. If your main interest is in another field, e.g., air pollution and its links with combustion or industrial processes, then you will find the relevant chapter restricted to basics, somewhat limited and disappointing. Emphasis is on education, on principles and how to apply these and not on describing the state-of-the-art.

In summary, this textbook on *Environmental Engineering: Principles and Practice* can be recommended to all teachers with responsibility in environmental engineering. It focuses upon problem solving, introducing statistical analysis, examples with US and SI units, water and wastewater treatment design, sustainability, public health. It offers all major topics of an US environmental engineering curriculum with clear preference for

wide-ranging knowledge on the one hand, water treatment on the other. There is no reference to law or practice outside the USA. Emphasis is on the compartment and treatment of water.

Students pursuing the civil and environmental engineering curriculum will benefit from the emphasis on practical applications in this book. This applies somewhat less on chemical and mechanical engineering. The text treats numerous environmental concepts of interest, especially those related on water and wastewater treatment and sustainability.

Book Review

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The Greenest Nation? A New History of German Environmentalism
by: Frank Uekötter
Published 2014
by MIT Press
Cambridge, MA, USA, 5 chapters, 233pp
ISBN: 978-0-262-02732-8

Apart from its prehistory, German environmentalism actually starts in the 1970s, following the North American environmentalism. As a follow-up (one of many), human ecology started to flourish in Europe. Modern German environmental policy began with the preparation for the 1972 Stockholm United Nations Conference on the Human Environment (UNCHE I). By that time an interdisciplinary group of researchers (in which the young BG held an assistant professorship) was asked by the SPD political party, which ran the federal ministry for development (under left winged Eppler) to write a preparatory book for Stockholm. This ministry did not represent Germany in Stockholm, though. It was the much more powerful ministry of the interior which went to Stockholm, under Minister Genscher who later became secretary of state under Chancellor Willy Brandt. They claimed to be responsible for environmental questions. These were part of the beginnings.

A federal ministry of the environment was only created after the Chernobyl accident in 1986. Since then, Germany has built up a strong environmental record. The country did an impressive job on nature protection, fighting pollution, dealing with the environmental perils of urbanisation, and established a strong record on environmental health and sustainability. For this latter criterion, it ranks among the top of the G20 member countries. Through the Rio Declaration (1992), it provided the world with the precautionary principle, which can be traced back in the environmental legislation of the 1970s.

On the other hand, the country produced for many years 45% of its electricity from coal, and more than half of that comes from air pollution impacting lignite. It straightened and concretised hundreds of kilometres of its river borders (contributing to the climate changes influenced floods). Until Fukushima, Germany was the world's number four in electricity generated from nuclear.

This is the context of this book which basically asks the question: 'If Germany is likely not the greenest nation on earth, is not it a country that environmentalists should closely look at?' Answering this question is not easy. One might for instance refer to

guiding countries in Europe's environmental policy. No doubt The Netherlands were ten years ahead of Belgium and a handful of South European countries in establishing an environmental planning-based policy. Sweden cultivated an advanced water quality policy. The European Union took a stimulating and constructive lead in advocating a worldwide CO₂-reduction policy, but measures in the 27 member countries are delayed. Apart from descriptive, analytical studies, setting old fashioned standards, attempting to control the spread of chemicals, and initiatives privatising sections of public environmental management, the European Union mainly abdicated in developing a coherent vision and policy on the quality of Europe's environment. In such a patchwork identifying leading or even guiding countries is difficult.

Although the question does not receive a (final) answer, this book is an interesting guide through this context of environmentalism. According to its subtitle 'A new history of German environmentalism' is provided in five chapters. The first one provides a bird perspective overview of environmentalism and environmental history. The focus is on Germany in a globalising world. Chapter 2 is about the 'prehistory' of German environmentalism. It covers the period from 1900 to 1945 for which the roots of the (international) nature conservation policy are described. The next chapter describes the early years of German environmentalism policy. It covers the period 1945 to 1980, from the post-war years until the environmental protests against a variety of projects, including that against a new runway for Frankfurt airport, and the anti-nuclear demonstrations. Chapter 3 is followed by a section with 'Interim remarks' looking for the underlying causes and explaining the rise of environmentalism. Three catalysts are identified: post-materialism, the importance of health, and changing economic contexts. The period 1980 to 2013 is discussed in chapter 4. This part is again primarily analytical-descriptive. It pays continuing attention to the German anti-nuclear movement (it is concluded with insight in Germany's environmental decision making on nuclear after Fukushima), but also discusses how climate change came up. A short chapter 5 looks in likely evolutions of environmentalism in the future.

The book does not fall in the trap of eulogising the German achievements. It succeeds in offering a balanced view of an historian by situating Germany's environmentalism in a broad transnational context, with special reference to Europe, Germany's colonial background, and the communist situation in the former German Democratic Republic (GDR). The book contributes in assessing a country's over-all performance on environmental issues. It helps understanding the current 'massive expansion of environmental regulation'. It explains the existential difference between having environmental potential and using it. It provides insight in the likely transformation of environmentalism during the years to come: less idealistic and more pragmatic, focusing on changing habits and lifestyles, further internationalism, and more stakeholder involvement. But most of all the book shows there is no uniform model or standard path that nations can follow replying to their citizens' call for more respect for nature.

One should wonder to what extent the book captured all main drivers of German environmentalism. E.g., there have always been conflicts between 'Naturschutz' (nature conservation) and 'Umweltschutz' (environmental protection) (what do we want to protect: frogs or a low energy way of life?), and these conflicts prevail until today within the ministry. Also, Green and Greening are sensitive issues in Germany. Until not so long ago, green was the colour of agriculture, perhaps up to the foundation of the Green Party. Agricultural policy, official extension services, university research and teaching at that time were totally opposed to anything that was near environmental thinking.

Author Frank Uekötter is a professor in environmental humanities at the University of Birmingham (UK). In Germany, he has a reputation as the deputy director of the Rachel Carson Center in Munich. To the international literature, he contributed over a dozen books on the history of (international) environmentalism. This book seems to build on a book in German which was published by the campus.

The publication is recommended to all human ecologists and environmental professionals looking at environmentalism in terms of civic activism, government policy, culture and lifestyle. It is a companion, providing background reading to students in human ecology and environmental science. It is a source of inspiration for environmental decision makers.